

he leaned into the most
convenient belly
whispering,
since this is a cocktail party
let me introduce my cock to your....

You should have seen her
hors d'oeuvre tremble
at that

-- Lyn Lifshin

Albany, New York

One More Good One. Why Not?

to be writing poetry at the age of 50
like a schoolboy
surely, I must be crazy;
racetracks and booze and arguments
with the landlord;
watercolor paintings under the bed
with dirty socks;
a bathtub full of goldfish
and a garbage can lined with
underground newspapers;
a record player that doesn't work
a cassette that doesn't work,
and I don't work --
I sit between 2 lamps,
bottle on the floor
begging a 20 year old typewriter
to say something in a way
well enough
so they don't confuse me
with the more comfortable
practitioners;
this is certainly not a game for
flyweights or ping pong players --
arguments to the contrary being strictly
grammar school.

-- but once you get the taste, it's good to get your
teeth into
words. I forgive those who
can't quit.
I forgive myself.
this is where the action is,
this is the bet-down hot horse that
comes in.

there's no better fort
no better flag
no better woman
no better way; yet there's else to say --
there seems as much hell in it as
magic; death gets as close as any lover has,
closer,
you know it like your right toe
like a mark on your hand
like your daughter's name,
you know it like the face of the corner
newsboy,
and you sit down among flowers and houses
among dogs and death and a boil on the neck,
you sit down and do it again and again
the machine gun sounds by the window
and the people walk by
as you sit in your undershirt,
50, in an indelicate March,
and their faces look in and write the next 5
lines, thank you, friends,
and they walk by and say,
"That old man in the window, what's the matter with
him?"
-- fucked by the muse, friends,
thank you,
and I roll a cigarette with one hand
like the old bum
I am, and then thank and curse the gods
all alike,
lean forward
after a bit of a drink,
think of various good fighters
like poor Hem, poor Beau Jack, poor Sugar Ray,
poor Kid Gavilan, poor Villon, poor Babe, poor
me, hahaha,
I lean forward
little bits of redhot ash
falling to my wrists,
teeth into the word
crazy at the age of 50,
I send it
home.

Moonlight Ride

we came out of The Bridge
to go home
and before Neeli could start the car
Peter walked out and sat
on the front of the hood.
"What the hell?" I asked
and Neeli started up.